Lovely Strange Dark
YORU NO DOUWA
"EVENING FAIRY-TALES"
BY KONNO KITA
CHAPTER 4
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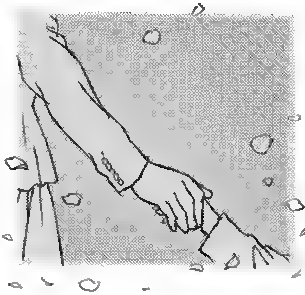
lovelystrangedark.wordpress.com

In a faroway land with the bluest of night skies two children were traveling.
They were searching for their hometown by the light of the stars.
Their footsteps were small but sure.
moving ever forword
FWIP
The Land of Night
BOOKS
THAT'LL BE 1260 YEN.

I try not to think about my own happiness.

Nor about the time Dad and I stood under the cherry blossoms

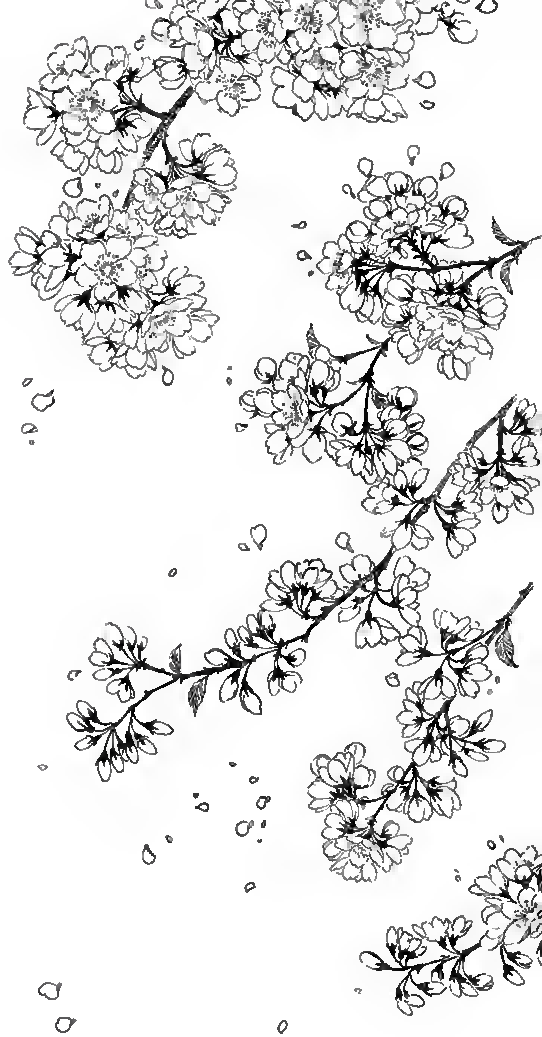
and watched Mom take my little brother by the hand and leave.



My mom never come back home,

but even now, whenever spring comes around, I feel the urge to quietly hold my breath under the cherry blossoms

and wait for her eventual return.



The House that Waits for Spring

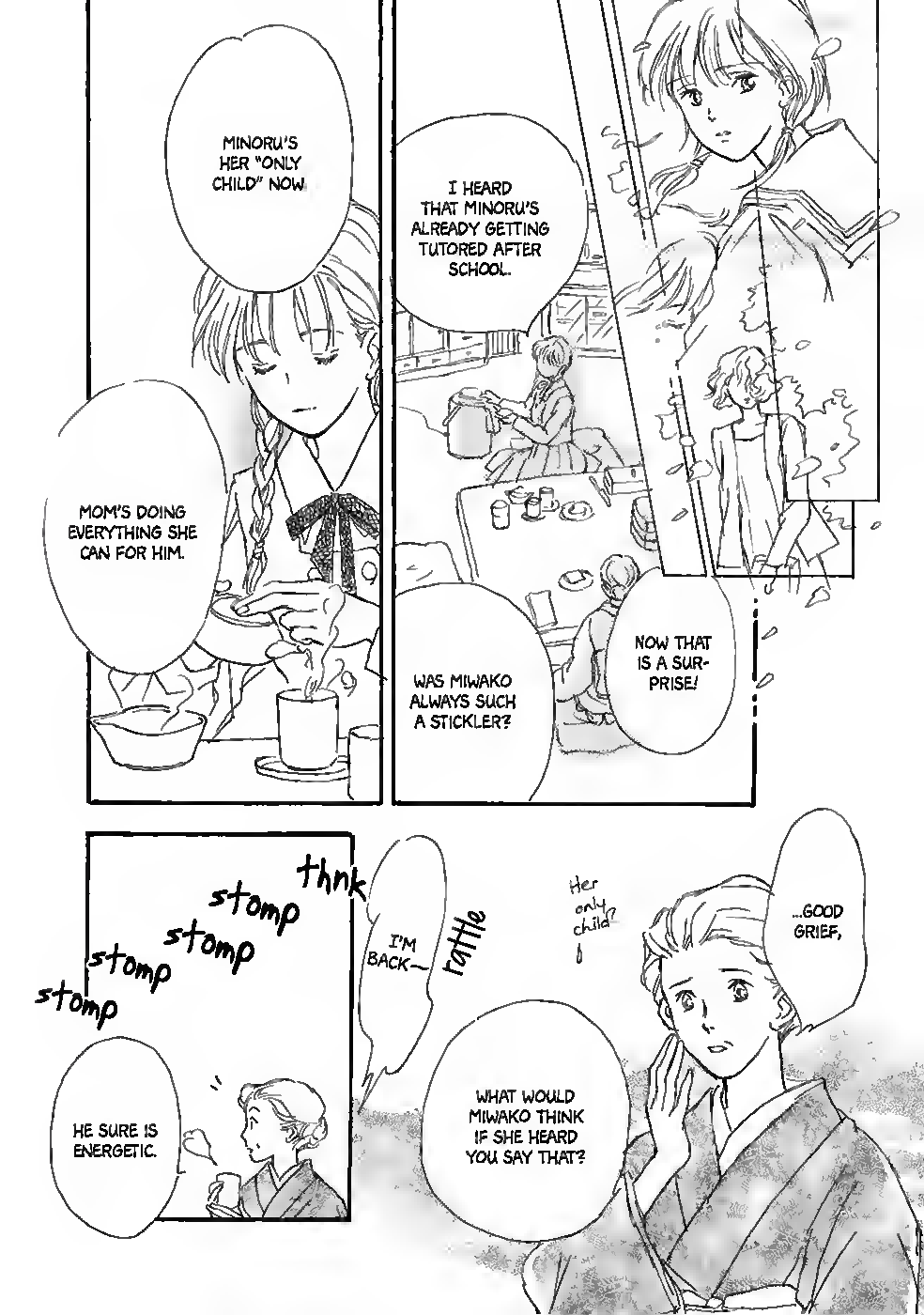
Peek
stomp
stomp
stomp
IS THAT YOU, AUNTIE?
YES, YOU'RE HERE!
I'M HOME!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT.
YOU STILL AREN'T LOCKING THE DOOR.
IT'S NOT SAFE.
THAT'S BECAUSE DAD COULD DROP BY ANYTIME.

IT'S HIS JOB.
HE'S AS IRRESPONSIBLE AS EVER, THAT ONE.
haaa
AND HE DOESN'T HAVE HIS OWN KEY?
HE LOSES THE SPARES AS FAST AS I CAN MAKE THEM.
crunch
IS HE ON HIS WAY BACK NOW?
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BUY IT. THE PUBLISHER WOULD SEND A COPY, SURELY.
The Lord of Night
I BOUGHT THIS ON MY WAY HOME. IT JUST CAME OUT.

I JUST WANTED TO BUY A COPY AT THE STORE WITH MY OWN MONEY,
LIKE A NORMAL CUSTOMER.
BUT HIWA, YOU HAVE TO STUDY FOR YOUR EXAMS THIS YEAR.
I'M GOING TO QUIT BEFORE SUMMER BREAK.
AS YOU SHOULD!
SO YOU STILL HAVE THAT PART TIME JOB AT THE ART STORE?
I HAVE A COPY FOR YOU TOO, AUNTIE.
OH, NO...
I KNOW HE PUT A LOT INTO THIS,
BUT I'M HOPELESS WITH CHILDREN'S BOOKS.
I DON'T REALLY GET THEM...
DAD'S BOOKS AREN'T HARD TO GET.
AND YOU SHOULDN'T THINK LIKE THEY'RE JUST FOR KIDS!
EVERY ADULT WAS ONCE A CHILD!
NOW YOU'RE MINCING WORDS.

IT'S YOSHIHISA'S BIRTHDAY TODAY, YOU KNOW.
THAT'S HIS FAVORITE.
WHOA, SUSHI!
WHAT'S THAT?
OH!
SHE GAVE HIM EXTRA AS A PRESENT FOR STARTING MIDDLE SCHOOL.
SHE REALLY OUTDID HERSELF.
STILL...
OH? WHAT IS IT?
A GIFT CERTIFICATE FOR A BOOK STORE.
HE GOT A GIFT FROM MY MOM, TOO.
THANKS! YOSH! WILL LOVE THIS.
YOU GUYS GET HIM ABOUT EVERYTHING HE NEEDS, AUNTIE.
MAYBE SHE TRIED TO GET HIM SOMETHING YOU WOULDN'T HAVE.
YOU CAN'T TURN THOSE GIFT CERTIFICATES INTO CASH. I FEEL BAD FOR HIM.

AND MINORU, TOO! SHE SAID HE'LL BE STARTING GRADE SCHOOL NEXT YEAR.
HE'S GOING TO BLOW IT ALL ON MANGA!
IF YOU GIVE HIM MONEY AT A BOOK-STORE,
HE NEEDS A LOT OF THINGS THIS TIME OF YEAR, SO IT'LL REALLY HELP OUT.
Diction-aries and reference books...
Hiwako!
SINCE YOSHIHISA CAME BACK?
TAP
..REALLY? THAT WAS FAST!
Hiwako!
HAS IT REALLY BEEN THAT LONG


MINORU'S HER "ONLY CHILD" NOW.
MOM'S DOING EVERYTHING SHE CAN FOR HIM.
I HEARD THAT MINORU'S ALREADY GETTING TUTORED AFTER SCHOOL.
WAS MIWAKO ALWAYS SUCH A STICKLER?
NOW THAT IS A SURPRISE!
thnk
stomp
stomp
stomp
stomp
HE SURE IS ENERGETIC.
I'M BACK~
rattle
Her only child?
WHAT WOULD MIWAKO THINK IF SHE HEARD YOU SAY THAT?
...GOOD GRIEF,

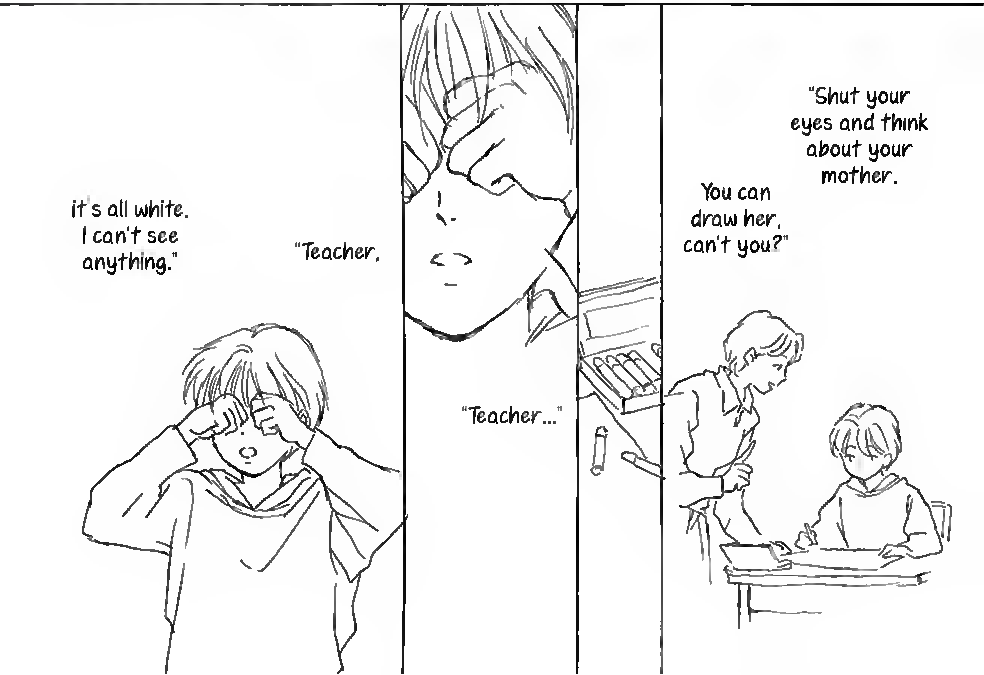
I'M STARVED! IS THERE ANY FOOD, HIWAKO?
OH, AUNTIE'S HERE!
LOOK AT THAT! YOU'VE GROWN INTO THAT UNIFORM OF YOURS.
YOSHI, SHE MADE US SUSHI.
WOW!
This one has sides
HEY! WASH YOUR HANDS FIRST!
OW!
slap
YOU'LL EAT WITH US, AUNTIE!
I'LL GET DINNER SET UP EARLY, BEFORE YOSHI STARVES TO DEATH.
SOUNDS GOOD. YOUR UNCLE'S OFF PLAYING GO, SO HE WON'T BE HERE UNTIL LATE.
THEN I'LL START SOME MISO SOUP RIGHT AWAY.
SLAP

YOSHI.
DON'T JUST LAZE AROUND. GO TAKE YOUR BATH.
GOOD NIGHT.
YUP! NIGHT.
AND LOCK THE DOORS PROPERLY, OK?
I WON'T!
DON'T FORGET TO TURN OFF THE GAS
HEY, HIWA.
DO YOU THINK
THAT THESE TWO KIDS ARE YOU AND ME?
THE KIDS TRAVELING IN THE LAND OF NIGHT.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, HIWA?
DO THESE TWO EVER FIND THE LAND OF DAWN?
DAD'S STORIES ARE ALWAYS LIKE THAT.
HE LEAVES THEM OPEN-ENDED.
WELL...
TRAVELING THROUGH SOME FAR-AWAY LAND.
I'M SURE THAT THOSE TWO ARE EVEN NOW
hehe
WE SURE SPENT ENOUGH TIME LOOKING FOR DAD.
WALKING AROUND THE PARK AT NIGHT, FOR ONE.
It's the suburbs, so it's safe.
WE GOT THAT POSTCARD FROM KYOTO THE OTHER DAY.
YEAH.
HE'S PROBABLY GAZING AT THE MOON AND THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS AND COMING UP WITH POEMS.
HE THINKS HE'S SOME HEIAN POET.
I WONDER
WHERE DAD IS RIGHT NOW?

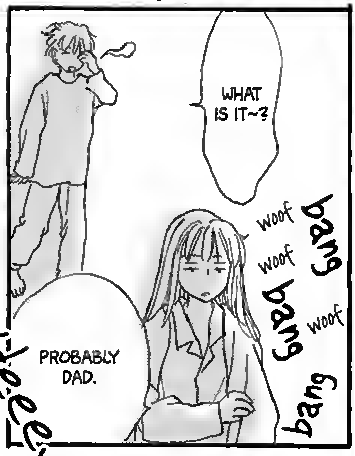
C'MON, I TOLD YOU TO GET IN THE BATH ALREADY!
QUIT HARP-ING—
WITH THE SCRUFFY BEARD!
hehe
AND THAT SCRUFFY BEARD?
hehe
hehe
hehe
SAME DIRTY CLOTHES!
WITH THOSE DIRTY CLOTHES OF HIS?
hehe
I CAN SAY IT HOWEVER MANY TIMES I WANT.
YOU SAID THAT BEFORE.
HAPPY BIRTH-DAY.
HM~?
YOSHI.

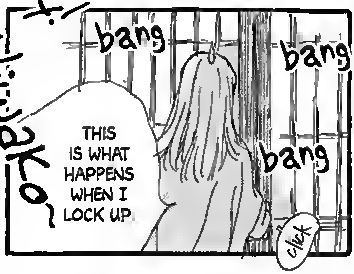
"Yoshihisa, what happened?"
"You've stopped drawing."
BUT THE OTHER DAY, AT SCHOOL—
UP UNTIL MINORU WAS BORN, IT SEEMED LIKE YOSHIHISA WAS GETTING ALONG FINE WHERE HE IS.
—WHAT SHOULD I DO?


it's all white. I can't see anything."
"Teacher,
"Teacher..."
You can draw her, can't you?"
"Shut your eyes and think about your mother.

"Mom kinda seems like she belongs to another family."

"It's all white. I can't see anything."



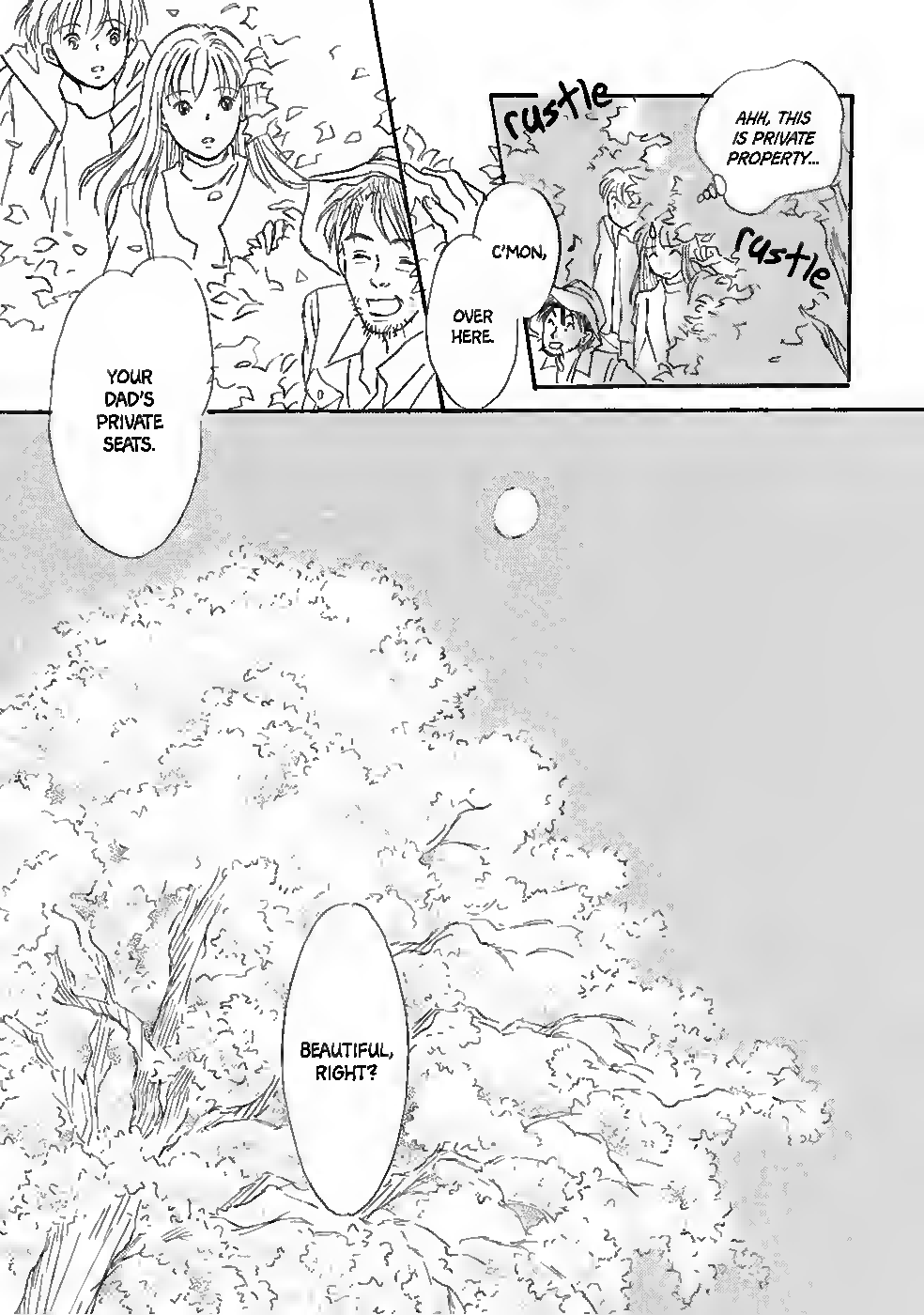


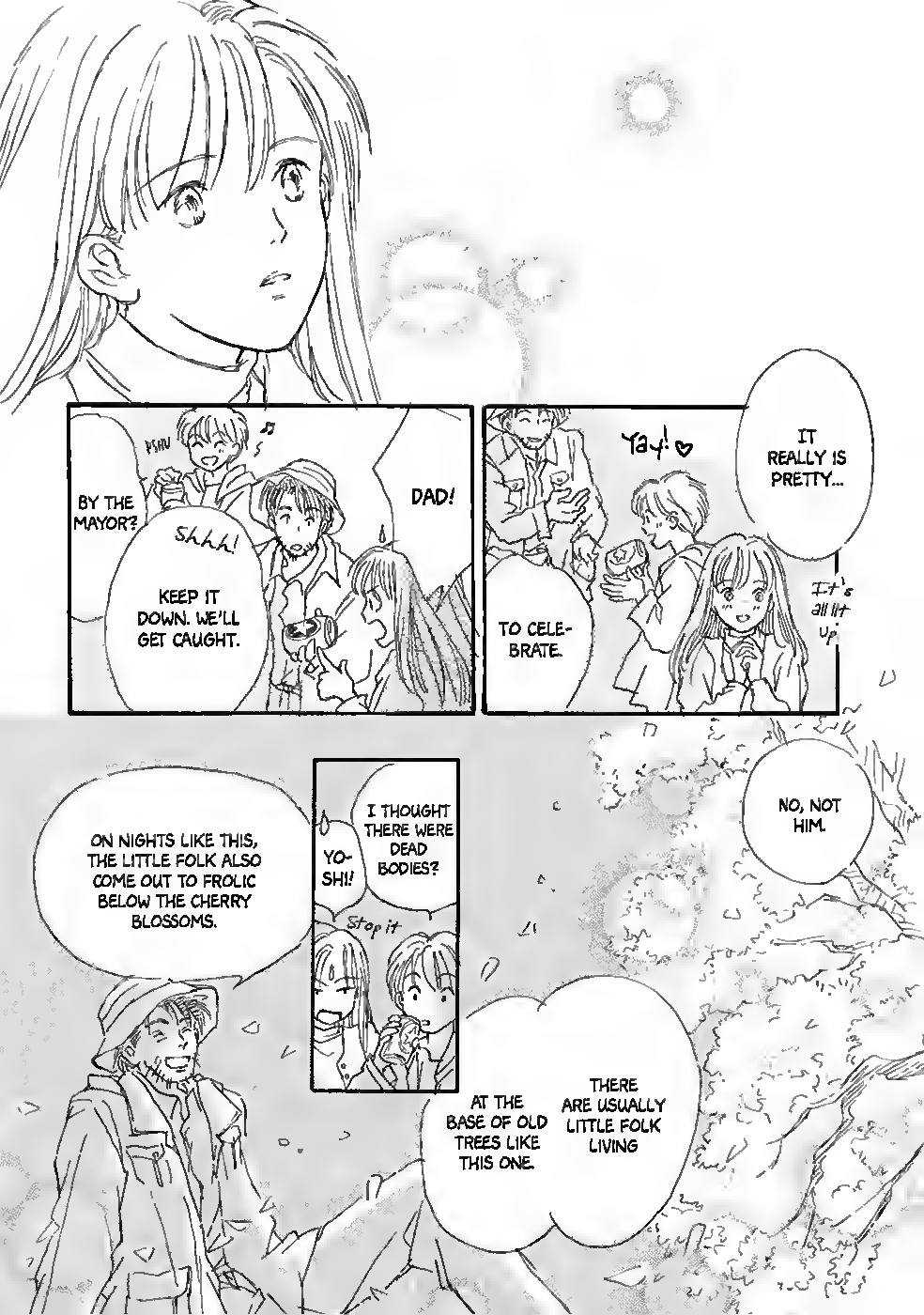
BANG BANG BANG BANG

woof woof woof

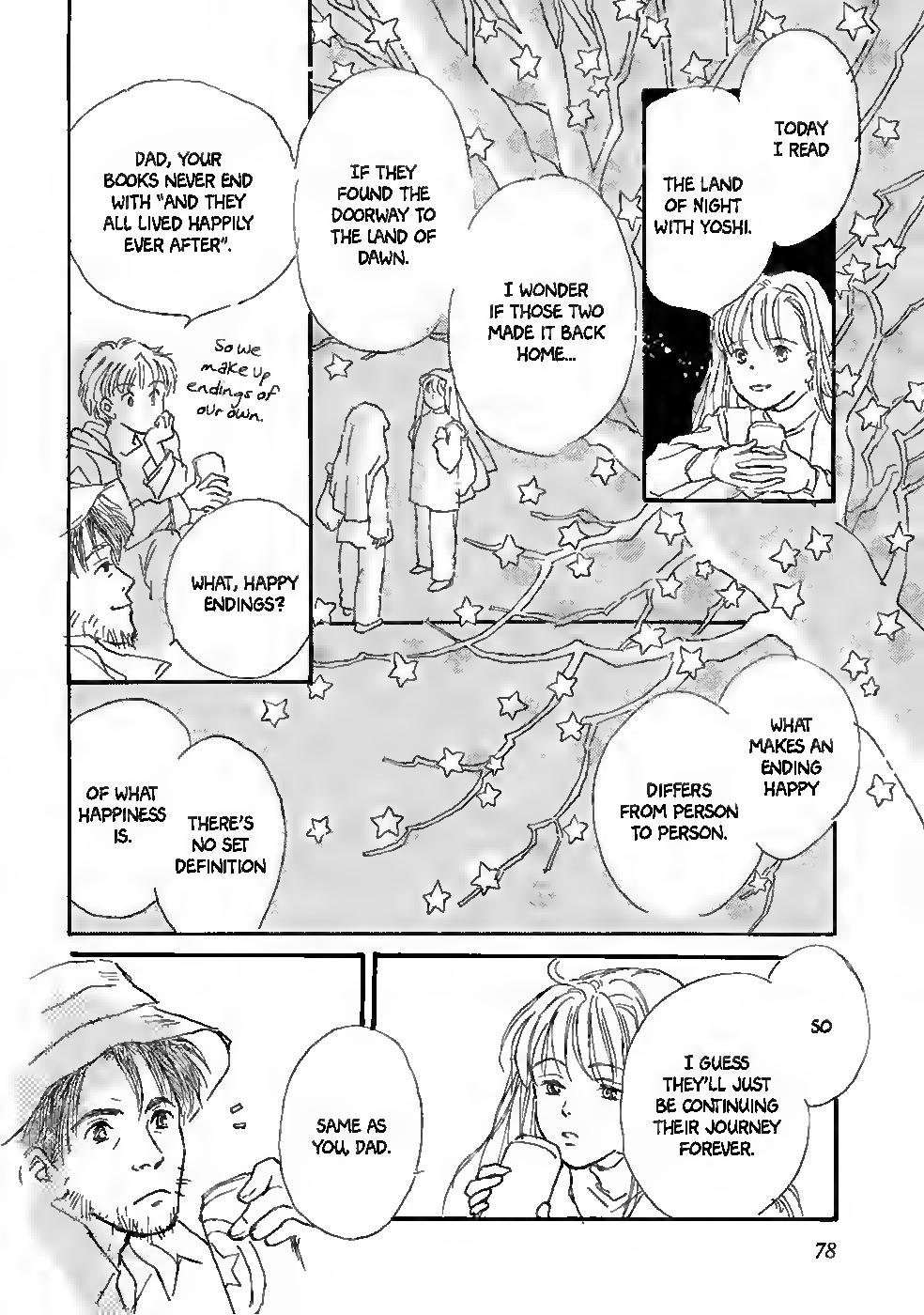
"Hiwako, that's because—"

RATTLE
HIWAKO! YOSHIHISA! THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS!
IT'S YOSHI'S BIRTHDAY TODAY, YOU KNOW!
DAD, KEEP IT DOWN.
Geez, the dog next door...
LET'S GO SEE THE BLOSSOMS BY MOONLIGHT!
woof woof woof
DAD! HEY, DAD!
AT LEAST LET US CHANGE FIRST!
And there he goes
Hurry up!
C'MON, LET'S GO.
WE CAN CELEBRATE WHILE ADMIRING THE BLOSSOMS.
BARELY.
Before midnight
IS IT STILL TODAY?
Well,
THE BEST BLOSSOMS AROUND HERE ARE AT THE MAYOR'S HOUSE.
IT'S NOT THE PARK?
HOW FAR ARE WE GOING?


YOUR DAD'S PRIVATE SEATS.
C'MON, OVER HERE.
rustle
AHH, THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY...
rustle
BEAUTIFUL, RIGHT?

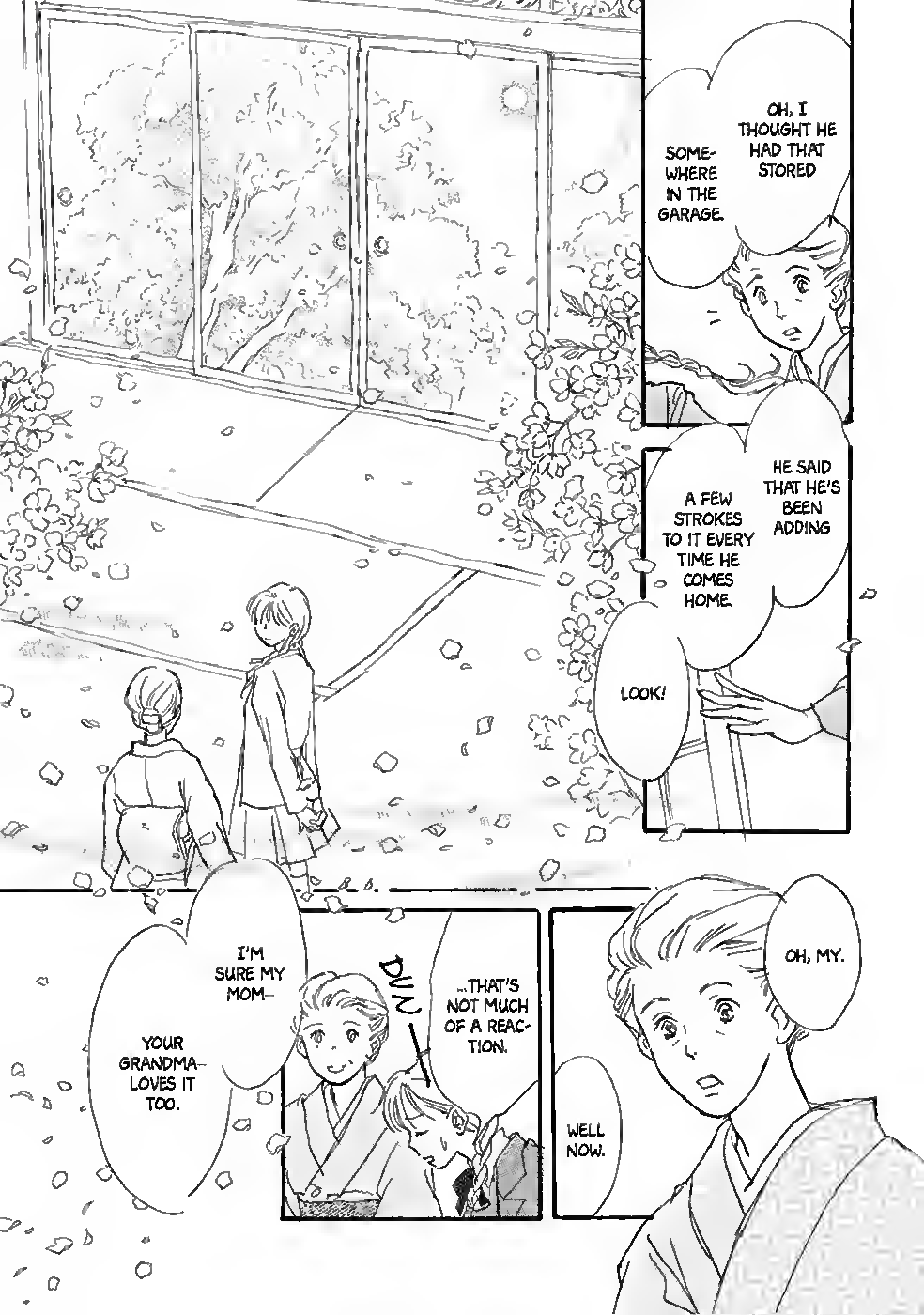

Hm
BY THE MAYOR?
SHHH!
KEEP IT DOWN. WE'LL GET CAUGHT.
DAD!
Yay!
IT REALLY IS PRETTY...
It's all lit up.
TO CELE-BRATE.
NO, NOT HIM.
I THOUGHT THERE WERE DEAD BODIES?
YO-SHI!
Stop it
ON NIGHTS LIKE THIS, THE LITTLE FOLK ALSO COME OUT TO FROLIC BELOW THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
THERE ARE USUALLY LITTLE FOLK LIVING
AT THE BASE OF OLD TREES LIKE THIS ONE.

A while back I found the expression "fanciful noture" in a book.
la la la
la la
My dad without a doubt has a fanciful nature.
IF YOU REALLY LISTEN—
TAP TAP
THERE, CAN YOU HEAR THE MUSIC?
TAP TAP TAP
SNAP
SO, LITTLE MISS, WORK YOUR MAGIC.
TAT
POOF!
he he he he
gets passed an ta me.
this brilliant magic
I hope


DAD, YOUR BOOKS NEVER END WITH "AND THEY ALL LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER".
IF THEY FOUND THE DOORWAY TO THE LAND OF DAWN.
I WONDER IF THOSE TWO MADE IT BACK HOME...
TODAY I READ THE LAND OF NIGHT WITH YOSHI.
So we make up endings of our own.
WHAT, HAPPY ENDINGS?
OF WHAT HAPPINESS IS.
THERE'S NO SET DEFINITION
DIFFERS FROM PERSON TO PERSON.
WHAT MAKES AN ENDING HAPPY
SAME AS YOU, DAD.
SO I GUESS THEY'LL JUST BE CONTINUING THEIR JOURNEY FOREVER.

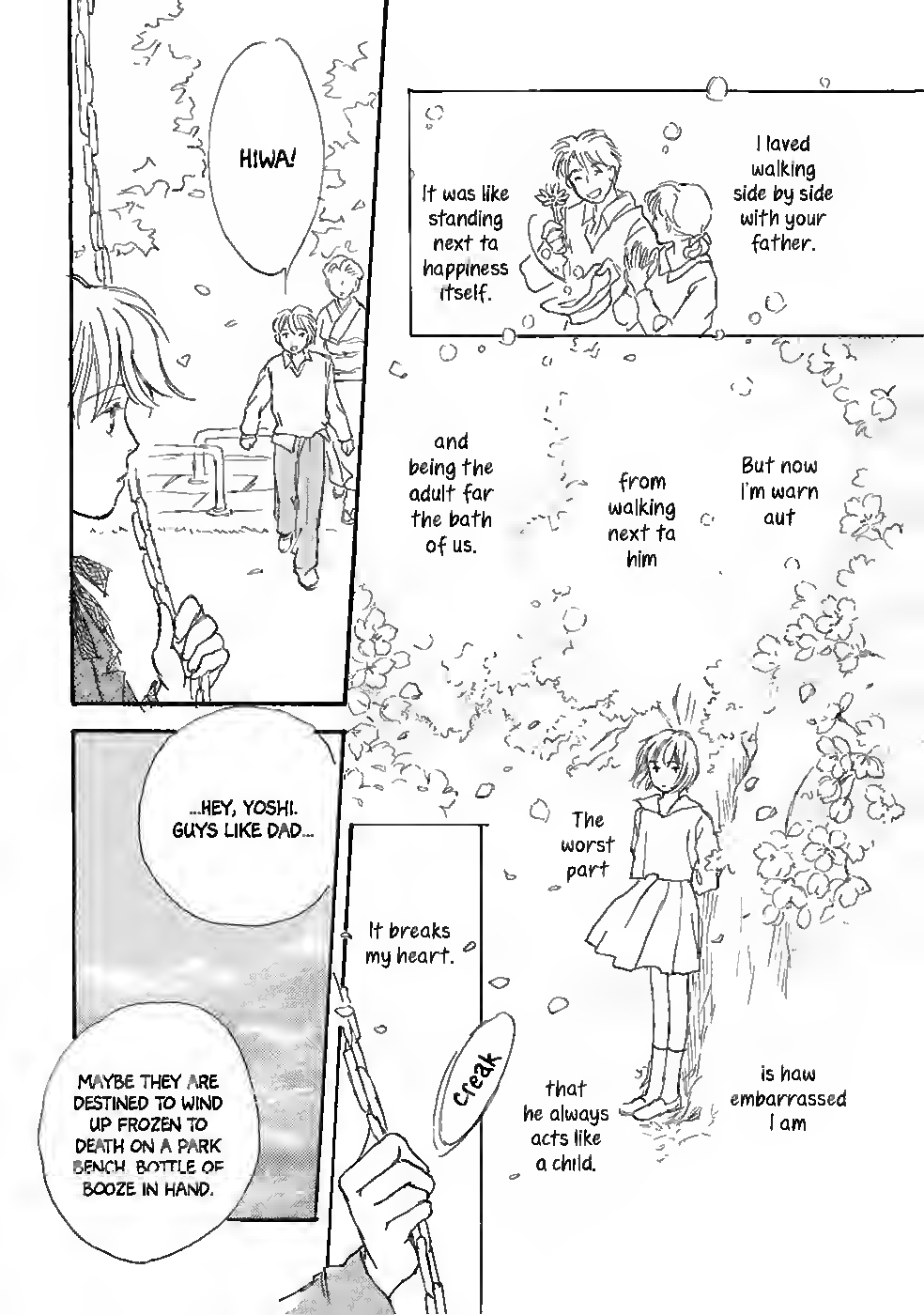
sleepy
Return to?
I WANT TO RETURN TO ONE DAY.
KNOWING THAT THERE'S SOMEWHERE
NOT HOME?
—NO...
AT THE SAME TIME, I'M SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING,
I SUPPOSE I AM TRAVELING AND DRAWING MY BOOKS.
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
IT'S PROBABLY NOT A "PLACE".
—I don't remember what my Dad said after that.

YOUR FATHER CAME HOME?
YEAH.
BUT HE LEFT THIS MORNING, SAYING HE'S OFF TO TOKYO TO CHASE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
He was here for like three days
He follows these blossoms as they bloom across Japan.
MISSED HIM AGAIN, HAVE I?
I WANT YOU TO SEE THE ALTAR ROOM SCREEN.
COME WITH ME, AUNTIE.
HUH?
DON'T TELL ME ONE CAN OF BEER KNOCKED HER OUT?
HAAA

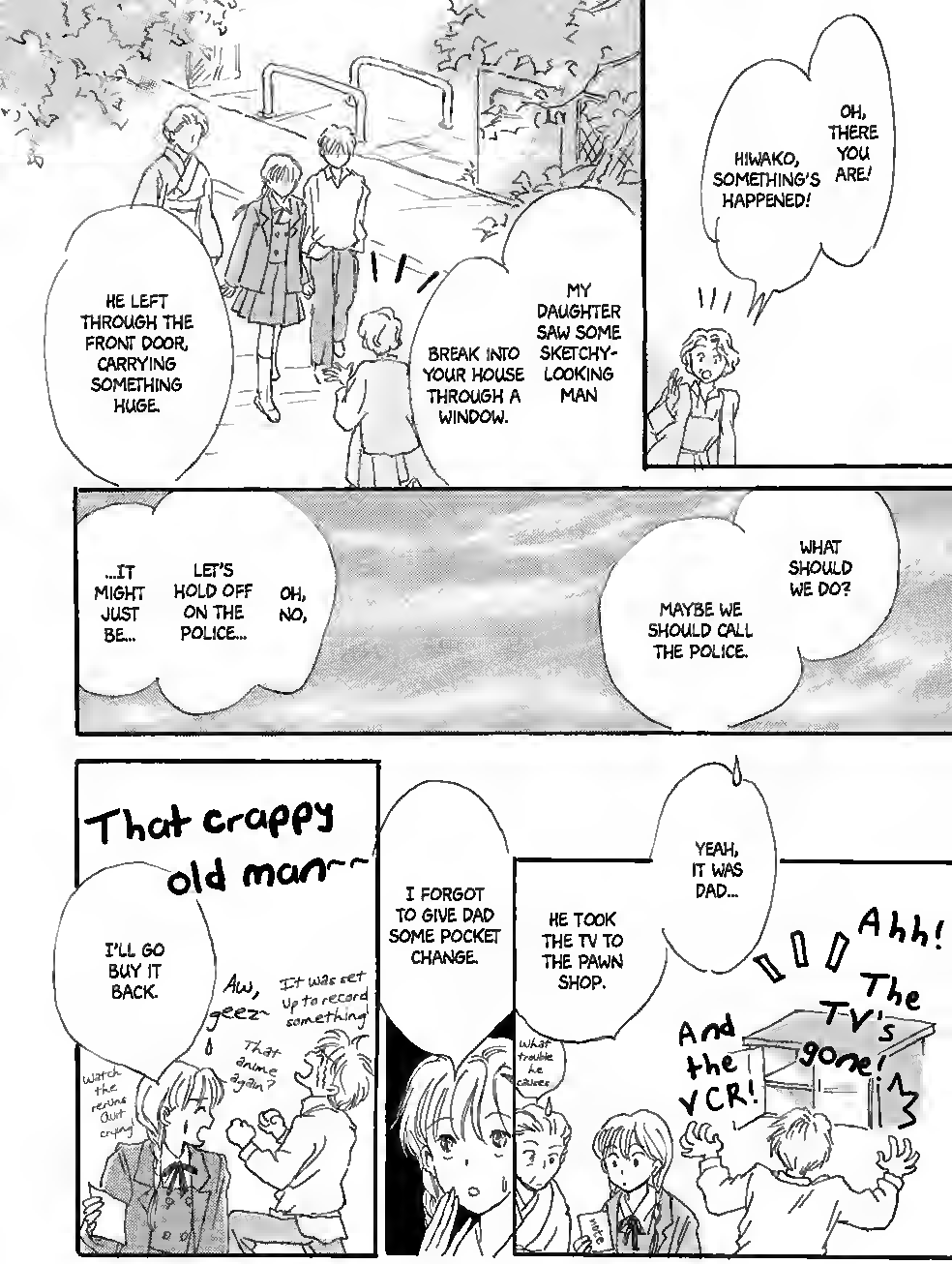

OH, I THOUGHT HE HAD THAT STORED SOME-WHERE IN THE GARAGE.
HE SAID THAT HE'S BEEN ADDING A FEW STROKES TO IT EVERY TIME HE COMES HOME.
LOOK!
OH, MY.
WELL NOW.
...THAT'S NOT MUCH OF A REAC-TION.
DUN
I'M SURE MY MOM—
YOUR GRANDMA— LOVES IT TOO.

YOU WANT YOSHI AND ME TO MOVE IN WITH YOU, AUNTIE?
SHE LOVED CHERRY BLOSSOMS MORE THAN ANYTHING IN THE WORLD.
THE MEMORIALS WILL BE LOVELY NOW.
WE'VE SPOKEN WITH YOUR DAD ABOUT IT.
HE'S NEVER GOING TO CHANGE.
WE WORRY ABOUT YOU.
AND YOU HAVE YOUR ENTRANCE EXAMS NEXT YEAR, HIWAKO.
I WANT YOU TO GET INTO A GOOD UNIVERSITY AND MARRY INTO A GOOD FAMILY.
WHEN YOU GO OUT INTO THE WORLD, YOU SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF—

HIWA-KO!
HIWA...
YOU'RE JUST LIKE MY MOM!
THUD
AH!
AND I SHOULD BE ASHAMED
OF LIVING WITH DAD?
RATTLE
SLAM
owww-
HUH? HIWAKO, WHAT HAPPENED?
...OH DEAR.
I REALLY PUT MY FOOT IN IT.
SHE'S AT A DIFFICULT AGE, TOO...
I'm sorry, Hiwa.


HIWA!
It was like standing next ta happiness itself.
I laved walking side by side with your father.
and being the adult far the bath of us.
from walking next ta him
But now I'm warn aut
The worst part
is haw embarrassed I am
that he always acts like a child.
...HEY, YOSHI. GUYS LIKE DAD...
It breaks my heart.
Creak
MAYBE THEY ARE DESTINED TO WIND UP FROZEN TO DEATH ON A PARK BENCH, BOTTLE OF BOOZE IN HAND.

BUT RIGHT NOW I'M STILL A KID,
AND I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT DAD.
BY THINKING HOW ADULTS THINK.
EVEN I'LL GROW UP AND PUSH DAD AWAY
MAYBE
BUT OUR DAD ISN'T GOING TO HAVE THAT SAD ENDING.
BURIED WITHOUT A NAME.
I JUST WISH I COULD ALWAYS
FEEL THIS WAY...


HE LEFT THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, CARRYING SOMETHING HUGE.
BREAK INTO YOUR HOUSE THROUGH A WINDOW.
MY DAUGHTER SAW SOME SKETCHY-LOOKING MAN
HIWAKO, SOMETHING'S HAPPENED!
OH, THERE YOU ARE!
...IT MIGHT JUST BE...
LET'S HOLD OFF ON THE POLICE...
OH, NO,
MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL THE POLICE.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
That crappy old man~~
I'LL GO BUY IT BACK.
Aw, geez~
It was set up to record something
That anime again?
Watch the reruns Quit crying
I FORGOT TO GIVE DAD SOME POCKET CHANGE.
HE TOOK THE TV TO THE PAWN SHOP.
What trouble he causes
YEAH, IT WAS DAD...
Ahh!
The TV's gone!
And the VCR!

HIWA, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THE DOOR?
LOCK IT?
stomp
stomp
stomp
YOSHI, DID YOU FORGET ANY-THING?
YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF GROCERIES TODAY.
CHECK THE DATE ON THE MEAT.
NO,
LEAVE IT OPEN.
HM?
...HEY, YOSHI.
BACK THEN, WHAT DAD SAID...
It's probably not a "place".

END